

**French Travelers to**  
**CALIFORNIA**

**Prepared for**  
**California Tourism**



**By**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *FRENCH TRAVELERS TO CALIFORNIA*

**Total Market.** Of 879,000 French visitors to the U.S., 29.7%, or 261,000 visited California in 2005. This represented a 21% increase from 2004, and a drop of 27% from the peak year of 1999. French arrival volumes at California ports-of-entry are showing a decrease in 2006 after increasing for the last two years.

	Visitors to CA from France (est.)	France to CA as % of total US
1994	219,000	26.6%
1995	256,000	27.8%
1996	294,000	29.8%
1997	289,000	29.5%
1998	348,000	34.3%
1999	356,000	33.6%
2000	330,000	30.4%
2001	215,000	24.5%
2002	190,000	25.9%
2003	196,000	28.5%
2004	215,000	27.7%
2005	261,000	29.7%

**Main Destination.** More than three-fourths of all French visitors to California (78%) reported California was the main destination of their U.S. trip.

**Purpose of Trip.** Among all French visitors to California in 2005, 64% reported vacation/holiday was one of their major reasons for traveling. Other reasons for traveling included visiting friends/relatives (30%), business (30%), and attending a convention (10%).

**Port of Entry.** A combined total of 60% of French visitors to California entered the U.S. through west coast ports. Over one-third (34%) entered through Los Angeles, followed by San Francisco (26%).

**Top Metropolitan Areas Visited in California.** French visitors to California in 2005 tended to center their trip itineraries on the major cities of San Francisco (61%), Los Angeles (48%), and San Diego (11%).

**Leisure/Recreation Activities.** The top leisure and recreation activities reported by visitors from France were shopping, dining and sightseeing. French travelers are less likely to visit amusement or theme parks and more likely to visit small towns or national parks than most other overseas visitors.

**Advance Trip Decision.** In total, French travelers to California reported making their trip decision 101 days in advance of their trip. This is a longer average trip decision time than the 90 days reported by all overseas visitors to California.

**Means of Booking Air Trip.** Less than half of French travelers to California (47%) booked their air trip via a travel agent. This was lower than the other major overseas markets to California (57%).

**Means of Booking Lodging.** In 2005, 25% of French visitors to California reported booking their lodging through a travel agent, while 14% reported booking their lodging through a company travel department.

**Trip Information Sources.** Among French visitors to California, the most frequently mentioned sources of information included: a travel agency (51%), followed by personal computer (33%), corporate travel departments (17%), direct information from airlines (16%), and travel guides (8%).

**Length of Stay.** French visitors stayed an average of 18.1 nights in the U.S. and 9.6 nights in California. In comparison the length of stay for all overseas visitors to California was 10.6 nights in the state.

**Sex and Age.** Men comprised 70% of French travelers to California and their median age was 42 years. This is the same as the median age of 42 years reported by all overseas male visitors to California. Women represented 30% of all French travelers to California in 2005 and their median age was 46 years. The median age reported by all overseas female visitors to California was also 40 years.

**Travel Party Size.** Nearly all (94%) of French travel groups consisted of adults only. Only 6% of French travel groups to California included children. The mean travel party size for all French visitors to the state was 1.5 people, compared to a mean travel party size of 1.5 people for all overseas visitors to California.

**Annual Household Income.** Visitors from France reported lower average median household incomes (\$68,800) relative to all overseas visitors to California (\$78,800).

**Accommodations.** Most French visitors (84%) to California chose a hotel or motel as their primary type of accommodation during their stay in 2005. This proportion is larger than the 79% reported by all overseas visitors to California. One-fifth (20%) of French visitors stayed in a private home in 2005, compared to 30% for all overseas travelers to California.

**Use of Prepaid Package.** In 2005, 20% of French visitors used prepaid packages. This was similar to the 15% of all overseas visitors to California who reported using prepaid packages.

**Expenditures.** Visitors to California from France spent an estimated 268 million dollars in California in 2005. French visitors were spending an average of \$107 per day during their visit, compared to \$103 for all overseas visitors. Each visitor to California from France spent an average of \$1,027 in the state.

**Average International Airfare.** Average international airfare to the U.S. was \$1,573 for French visitors, which was lower than the \$1,821 average international airfare reported by all overseas visitors to California during 2005.